

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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SUBJ: URANIUM BAN CAUSES DISPUTE WITHIN LABOR RANKS

REF: BRISBANES 179

SUMMARY: THE URANIUM BAN VOTED BY THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS HAS CAUSED AN INTER-UNION DISPUTE WITHIN QUEENSLAND LABOR RANKS AS SPOKESMEN FOR EACH SIDE CONTINUE TO MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENTSM IN A FURTHER DEVELOPMENTN URANIUM MINE WORKERS AT THE MARY KATHLEEN MINE REJECTED YESTERDAY BY A VOTE OF 199-1, THE BAN OF THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS. END SUMMARY

1. TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL PRESIDENT MR. JACK EGERTON, YESTERDAY STRONGLY OPPOSED THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS BAN ON URANIUM MINING. MR. EGERTON STATED THAT THE CONGRESS WAS ONLY A SOUNDING BOARD WHOSE DECISIONS HAD TO GO TO THE TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL FOR IMPLEMENTATION. HE CLAIMED THAT THE TLC IS QTE THE ONLY POLICY-MAKING BODY END QTE. HE CRITICIZED THE CONGRESS DECISION AS AN EXAMPLE OF A DECISION BY UNION LEADERS WHICH HAD NOT BEEN TAKEN TO THE RANK AND FILE. HE DECLARED THAT NOT ONE UNION AT MARY KATHLEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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WOULD SUPPORT SUCH A BAN.

2. HIS STATEMENT WAS SUPPORTED BY A VOTE TAKEN AT MARY KATHLEEN YESTERDAY IN WHICH MINE WORKERS VOTED ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY TO REJECT THE CONGRESS BAN.

3. MR. EGERTON'S COMMENTS WERE DISPUTED BY MR. P.E. DUNNE, THE STATE SECRETARY OF THE AUSTRALIAN RAILWAYS. MR. DUNNE CLAIMED THE CONGRESS BAN WAS BINDING ON ALL UNIONS, AND ADDED THAT THE ARU HAD ALREADY IMPOSED A BAN AND WOULD NOT HAUL ANY URANIUM. HE WAS SUPPORTED BY BUILDING WORKERS INDUSTRIAL UNION STATE PRESIDENT, MR. H.R. HAMILTON, WHO SAID THAT ANY OF HIS UNION MEMBERS AT THE MINE WOULD BE WITHDRAWN AND NO OTHER MEMBERS SENT THERE.

COMMENT: THE CURRENT DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS AND THE TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL BRINGS TO MIND ANDREW JACKSON S COMMENT THAT QTE THE SUPREME COURT HAS MADE ITS DECISION. NOW LET IT ENFORCE IT. END QTE. THE CONGRESS DOES NOT HAVE THE ABILITY TO ENFORCE THIS DECISION OVER THE DETERMINED OPPOSITION OF THE TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL PRESIDENT, MR. J. EGERTON. HOWEVER, THIS ISSUE BECOMES ENTIRELY ACADEMIC IF THE RAILWAYS UNION WILL NOT HAUL ANY URANIUM.

ONE INTERESTING POINT HAS BEEN THE POSITION ADOPTED BY MR. EGERTON CONCERNING THE INTRINSIC MERITS OF MINING URANIUM. MR. EGERTON STATED YESTERDAY QTE I DON'T THINK AUSTRALIA HAS TO MINE URANIUM. THE PROPER PLACE FOR IT IS IN THE GROUND. BUT IT IS NOT MY DECISION AND NOT YOURS. THE POWERS THAT BE HAVE DECIDED. END QTE. IT SEEMS APPARENT THAT HE IS BEING CAREFUL TO BASE HIS OPPOSITION TO THE BAN ON THE WAY IN WHICH DECISIONS ARE TAKEN WITHIN THE LABOR MOVEMENT, AND NOT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST URANIUM MINING.
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